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DRAFT - 5 March 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR:

SUBJECT :

1. The attached staff study recommends that certain refinements be made in the Clandestine Services approach to subject filing. These changes will affect the "official system" as described in [] but will in no way disturb the concentration or emphasis of that system upon the control and retrieval of personality data. The effect of the recommended changes would be to expand "official system" controls to include all records which are important to our organization in any central sense. The new gauge, or standard, of what is important would be the assignment of a function to the CS and the existence of a staff element representing that function. Additionally, such elements would be required to take an active, continuing interest in the records reflecting their function. We would change the ratio of important, controlled, or "official" records to auxiliary or unofficial records from the present 30/70 to an estimated 50/50.

2. The proposal itself, despite conceptual simplicity, inevitably becomes technical in its application. For this reason, it is recommended that, subsequent to CSEC approval of the necessity for change, the proposal itself be judged by a committee of records experts drawn from the affected components.

CONFIDENTIAL

DD/P [] Records Management Officer

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I. PROBLEM

Any official filing system should make provision for and represent, or deliberately not represent, all the elements of the organization to which it applies. The "official" subject files of the Clandestine Services include only 17% of the subject files reported in the 1961 records inventory. This inventory also showed that files do exist, both within and without the official system, which apply to the CS responsibility for maintaining the record on International Communism, Foreign Intelligence and Security Services, and for other target, background reference and research needs. The fact that a large proportion of these necessary and representative files exist outside the system not only demonstrates the need but also demonstrates that the system, in its application, is neither representative nor sufficiently comprehensive. The official subject filing concept does indeed provide for fuller representation of CS mission elements. That it has not worked out is attributable in part to lack of enforcement and lack of any appeal to functional elements which have long ignored the system but is attributable primarily to weaknesses in the concept itself which make enforcement and implementation extremely difficult.

II. FACTS BEARING ON THE PROBLEM

- A. There are seventeen (17) major subject categories in the present system with 6,775 subject file numbers and titles assigned as of July 1961. The distribution of these assigned file titles within major categories is not uniform; e.g., one half of the 17 major categories have only 5% of the file titles and, conversely, 3 categories have 65% (Tab A). In other words, the official breakdown of the business

- B. With certain unenforced exceptions, there are no pre-established file titles, i.e., a title for the file is made up as the need for a file arises and, therefore, similar papers applying to different countries may be filed in folders with different titles; a file may be established for a single document, or a folder may contain so much material that information is hard to find. Two attempts to pre-establish file titles have failed because they were informal and not followed up.
- C. "Specific subject" file numbers (the three digits following a category number) or the record breakout are assigned consecutively, i.e., papers on the modus operandi of an intelligence service in Japan have a different file number than a similar paper for an intelligence service in Germany.
- ✓ D. The existing categories do not provide for the filing of official managerial papers, i.e., most branch and division chiefs have subject files containing operational policy, planning, and precedent paper that is not included in the official CS system, and which are maintained and disposed of at the discretion of the individual rather than by any prescribed standards. This is also true throughout the staffs.
- E. Cross referencing and cross filing is the main source of subject file information but correspondence which will eventually be filed in 201 or project files is not being adequately cross referenced to the subject files as indicated by CI Memorandum #97, dated 7 November 1961. This memorandum requests more attention to the problem and points out that only 38 documents were cross referenced in the month of August, 1961.

- P. The subject files maintained in RID are not used as a reference or research source as reflected by a tally of some 25,000 requests for files of which only about 20 were for subject matter.
- G. The file titles that have been assigned are, for the most part, long descriptive phrases which do not include key words for fast reference identification.
- H. Subject files are maintained in the divisions in the sequence determined by the individual custodians because neither the official file titles nor numbers provide a planned sequence.
- I. The disposition of subject files is a time consuming, costly process because a document by document review is required in the same manner as for projects and 201 files, although there is a relatively small amount of indexed material in them.

III. DISCUSSION

- A. The purpose of the category is to separate subject file material into clearly defined groups which can be more easily managed than if all material is combined. Such groups should be representative of the organizations primary responsibilities. However, this objective is defeated to a large extent in the present system because the categories do not represent good apportionment of the record volume as evidenced by the high number of file titles assigned in two or three categories, and relatively few in the remainder (Tab A). It is further defeated by the fact that the organizational elements representing the neglected categories have never been brought into the system or persuaded to try to use the system.

- B. The official subject file system provides a precise location for finding a document which can be associated with the proper file number, as happens when an index card refers to personality information or if a specific cross reference has been made. However, the system has very real disadvantages in that it provides no organized plan for determining how a new document should be filed, how to find a non-indexed document in file, or how to do research on any given subject. It contemplates and ensures document location if we know what document we want. It makes no provision for use and utilization of the material by subject. This most glaring deficiency of the system is evidenced by the fact that the official CS subject files do not include most of the material maintained to fulfill Agency responsibilities as outlined in DCID 5/3. This is information on the Illegal Apparatus of the Communist Party held by the CI Staff, and most of the material held in the divisions concerning the organization, plans, and activities of Foreign Intelligence and Security Services. This lack of a file plan also means that we continually do our day-to-day work from the reference instead of the record.
- C. The limited cross referencing to subject files, and the infrequent calls for these files in RIB is an indication of the failure of the system as a reference and research source of information. In spite of instructions, such as contained in CI Memorandum #97 mentioned in paragraph B. above, little change can be expected because of the inherent difficulty in identifying the proper file
- Tambs*

to cross reference or to search. Utilization, review, or cross reference action requires a review of a many page machine list of long narrative titles without positioned key words and without sequence below the basic category number. This failure of the system is made even more clear by the knowledge that almost every request for a report on any given subject necessitates a special study rather than a simple review of the record contained in appropriate subject files.

- D. CI Memorandum #00 represents a start in the establishment of a good subject file system. It is unfortunate that no follow through action has been taken to make it work properly. While to a somewhat lesser extent Category 4 has a file plan, no similar effort has been made with respect to any of the other categories. File plans for all categories, tied in with the present file numbering system, could be developed and published as a handbook. This is standard practice governing the operation of subject file systems in use throughout government and industry. Such a handbook for the CS is an essential step in overcoming the problems we now experience with the system.

- E. One of our most time consuming, costly, and troublesome paper processes is the review of official files in order to dispose of them. With the installation of the WALNUT system which will permit retrieving indexed material without going to the hard copy, we should be able to dispose of entire subject files based on the retention value of the subject matter instead of reviewing

This is records manipulation - not records management

each document filed under the subject heading. This could be accomplished by the record scheduling technique.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

The official subject file system can be modified to meet the requirements of the CS without affecting the efficiency or effectiveness of any aspect of the present system.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

- A. Require each staff element to produce a file plan which will cover the subjects related to its areas of responsibility, along the lines of CI Memorandum #80.
- B. When all such file plans have been assembled, review against the present categories to determine if the file volume cannot be distributed more evenly into clearly defined categories. (Exhibits A and B of Attachment B illustrate a separation of Category 4 into two categories.)
- C. Merge the accumulated file plans into an organized subject file handbook as illustrated in Tab B and make it available to all desk officers. (This change will require renumbering of the present major categories so that the specific subject number will not duplicate the previously assigned numbers.)

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D. Require that RID ☐ continue to classify field correspondence which is to be subject filed, but eliminate this requirement for intra-headquarters correspondence, i.e., the desk will file without central control of this material, but as necessary will have RID ☐ index the personality information in such documents.

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E. Schedule the disposition of subject files as determined by the retention value of a whole category or subject rather than by individual documents. (To be delayed until WALNUT is advanced to the point that reference to indexed material can be made from film rather than hard copy.)

TAB A

ASSIGNMENT OF FILE NUMBERS BY MAJOR CATEGORY

<u>Major Category</u>	<u>Active File Nos.</u>	
005	2172	17.6% of categories/65.6% of File Nos.
004	1654	
120	688	
008	522	50% of categories/95.2% of File Nos.
009	491	
002	391	
006	322	
126	215	
124	128	50% of categories/4.8% of File Nos.
010	53	
011	47	
123	23	
125	20	
132	19	
127	13	
128	10	
003	7	
	6775	

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